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Letter dated 3 July 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you that, upon instructions from my Government, I have sent today to the Secretary-General the letter that is attached herewith (see annex), providing him with clarifications on the report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government, as well as on the decision on the Moroccan Sahara issue adopted at the Summit during the thirty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Nouakchott, on 1 and 2 July 2018.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Atlassi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 3 July 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French]

On instructions from my Government, and with reference to the report of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union to the Heads of State and Government of the African Union and to the decision on the issue of the Moroccan Sahara adopted at the African Union Summit held in Nouakchott on 1 and 2 July 2018, I have the honour to convey the following.

1. Confirmation by the African Union of the primacy of the United Nations process in dealing with the issue of the Moroccan Sahara:

The report of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union recognizes the exclusively United Nations character of the political process on the Moroccan Sahara. In this regard, it specifies the following:

(a) "The need for the African Union to bring its approach within the framework of reinforced support for the efforts of the United Nations, in order to increase their chance of success" (para. 20c);

(b) "It would not mean that the African Union would develop a process that would be parallel to that of the United Nations" (para. 20c);

(c) "The role of the African Union should be aimed at accompanying and supporting the efforts of the United Nations, and the Security Council should remain seized of the matter" (recommendation 21b).

The report also confirms that the United Nations Security Council resolutions are the only point of reference for dealing with the issue of the Moroccan Sahara. In this regard, recommendation 21c underlines that "the Conference of the African Union should provide effective support to the United Nations process, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions".

The other bodies of the African Union, particularly those which have been exploited by opponents of Morocco, such as the Peace and Security Council, are thus barred from consideration of this issue. Indeed, recommendation 21d notes that in order "to ensure the required coherence, the Sahara issue would be mentioned only in this context and at this level", referring to the context of the Conference of the African Union and to the level of Heads of State.

2. Taking into account the Moroccan position

The report, in paragraph 12, reiterates the Moroccan position, noting that "the Moroccan authorities have reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations in the conduct of the negotiation process. They cautioned against the risks of a parallel process, saying that by recognizing the pseudo-"sadr", the African Union had excluded itself from efforts to find a solution".

3. Role of Algeria

In paragraph 17, the report stresses the crucial role that the Algerian and Mauritanian authorities must play in finding a solution. To this end, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union urged the two countries to support actively the efforts made to restart the negotiating process, underlining that the conflict had already lasted too long and that the current situation was hampering the integration

efforts within the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union and efforts aimed at promoting regional security more effectively.

4. African Union follow-up mechanism

The Conference established a follow-up mechanism, in accordance with the recommendation made in paragraph 21c of the report, in the form of a troika consisting of the outgoing, incoming and current chairpersons, and the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union.

The mandate of the Troika is limited to following the United Nations process on the issue of the Moroccan Sahara. The Troika has no decision-making power on the Sahara issue. It has no mandate to intervene in the search for a political solution, or to take action. Its only role, as specified in paragraph 5a of the decision of the African Union, is "to provide effective support to United Nations efforts".

Paragraph 5a of the decision also stipulates that the question of the Sahara may be addressed only within the framework of the Conference and at the level of Heads of State. It is only at this level, and through this exclusive channel, that the Sahara issue may be considered by the African Union. This excludes any other initiative or meeting that might be undertaken or organized by anyone outside this framework.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Atlassi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.